

REMARKS

By this amendment, Applicant has amended the claims to more clearly define the invention and eliminate the indefiniteness problems noted by the Examiner in numbered section 3 of the office action and to clarify that a plurality of three-dimensional finite products are laid on the first nonwoven, fabric. See, e.g., the preamble of original claim 1 and the paragraph bridging pages 1 and 2 of applicant's specification. Claims 10-13 have been added to recite the preferred values previously recited in claims 3—6, respectively. Claim 14 has been added to define a further feature of the invention. See, e.g., the third paragraph on page 1 of applicant's specification.

In view of the foregoing amendments to the claims, all of the claims now in the application comply with 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-7 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, are requested.

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,314,627 to Ngai. Claims 3 and 5 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ngai. Applicant traverses these rejections and requests reconsideration thereof.

The elected invention relates to a method for hydrodynamic inclusion of a layer comprising a plurality of three-dimensional finite products between at least two nonwovens. The method includes providing a first nonwoven fabric and consolidating the first nonwoven fabric with liquid jets emerging continuously and uniformly over a working width of a nozzle bar, by spraying a liquid under pressure from fine nozzle openings arranged in a row from at

least one nozzle strip extending over the working width of at least one nozzle bar towards the first nonwoven fabric which is moving ahead of the nozzle bar such that the first nonwoven fabric is initially consolidated over its entire surface using water jets. Then, a plurality of three-dimensional finite products are laid on the consolidated first nonwoven fabric, and the plurality of three-dimensional finite products covered with a second nonwoven fabric which has been consolidated over its entire surface using water jets to provide a composite comprising the first nonwoven fabric which has been consolidated over its entire surface, the plurality of three-dimensional finite products and the second nonwoven fabric which has been consolidated over its entire surface. This composite is then subjected to hydrodynamic needling uniformly over its working width to join the first and second nonwoven fabrics together.

The Ngai patent discloses a composite non-woven fabric that has two outer non-woven layers with structured surfaces that are efficient at wiping solid or semi-solid matter, with a center non-woven layer that is substantially impermeable to the passage of solid or semi-solid matter. A method of making a composite non-woven fabric includes the general steps of forming a first and second hydroentangled nonwoven webs with structured surfaces, and laminating the first and second webs to a central non-woven web that is substantially impermeable to passage of solid and semi-solid matter.

The present invention, on the other hand, relates to a method for hydrodynamic inclusion of a layer comprising a plurality of three-dimensional finite products between at least two nonwovens. Thus, according to the

present invention, a plurality of three-dimensional finite products are laid on the consolidated first nonwoven fabric. Such a method allows finite goods such as pre-fabricated padding and/or absorbent inserts for nappies, wound dressings, compresses, cushions, possibly also plasters or similar finished products to be continuously packaged without the products inadmissibly losing any volume and the covering nonwovens becoming linked to the products during the packaging needling. Such is neither disclosed nor suggested by Ngai since the center non-woven layer in Ngai appears to be a single layer, coextensive with the two outer non-woven layers (see, Fig4 of Ngai).

Accordingly, the Ngai patent does not disclose and would not have rendered obvious the claimed invention.

Claims 4, 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ngai in view of US Patent No.6,177,370 to Skoog et al. Applicant traverses this rejection and requests reconsideration thereof.

The Examiner has cited the Skoog et al patent for its teachings in connection with water needling pressures and water needling both sides of a fabric. However, clearly nothing in Skoog et al remedies the basic deficiency of Ngai noted above. Accordingly, claims 4, 6 and 7 are patentable over the proposed combination of references, at least for the reasons noted above.

Applicant notes the Examiner has cited a number of documents as being pertinent to applicant's disclosure. However, since these documents were not applied in rejecting claims formerly in the application, further discussion of these documents is deemed unnecessary.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, favorable

reconsideration and allowance of all the claims now in the application are requested.

To the extent necessary, applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the deposit account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP, Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case: 1352.44947X00), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

ANTONELLI, TERRY, STOUT & KRAUS, LLP

/Alan E. Schiavelli/

Alan E. Schiavelli
Registration No. 32,087

AES/at
(703) 312-6600